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PEMBROKE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, March 29, 2021
North Pembroke Elementary School Library

7:00 PM

Call to Order

Mr. Tropeano called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Present from Administration: Erin Obey, Superintendent; Marybeth Brust, Assistant Superintendent; Jessica DeLorenzo, Director of Student Services

Present from Committee: Michael Tropeano, Chair; David Boyle, Vice Chair; Susan Bollinger, Secretary; Lance Kennedy and Susie Scholl

Acknowledge & Schedule Visitors

No audience members present.

Adjustments to Agenda

None

Approval of Bill Schedule

Warrants were sent out electronically for approval.

Communications

None

Consideration of Approval: School Committee Meeting Minutes of March 22, 2022

VOTE: On a motion made by Susie Scholl and seconded by Lance Kennedy, it was unanimously voted to approve the school committee meeting minutes of March 22, 2022 as presented.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Lance Kennedy, Susie Scholl and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

Superintendent's Report

Teaching and Learning Budget Presentation

Ms. Brust presented a FY22 goals update. She said teachers are confident with enVision math and they are happy for three more years of it. Additionally, My World Interactive was adopted for grade 5 and OpenSciEd was piloted for grades 6-8. For grades 9-12 the Pathways for business, computer science, and digital arts were developed. She informed the committee that eight students earned the Seal of Biliteracy, and the languages represented were French, Greek, Latin and Portuguese.

In terms of instruction, there are four focuses in FY22, and one focus was Studying skillful teaching PD for all 2nd, 3rd and 4th year educators, as 3rd and 4th year educators did not have the offering during COVID. A second focus is on a newly created K-2 Literacy Committee that is examining reading practices to make a decision on next steps. She explained the "Reading Wars" and said it is a difference of opinion on how students learn to read, and some people believe that students learn through a balanced literacy approach which involves a lot whole language and memorizing

words and using visual clues to learn words and other people believe in The Science of Reading which focuses heavily on phonemic awareness, orthographic mapping and a number of different instructional strategies that support those. The district is looking at professional development for teachers to become better skilled reading teachers but it's not as if the district didn't teach phonics or teach the blending of sounds or teach spelling. The program is a bit different in terms of providing professional development for teachers, but the district has always used a little bit of both of those programs. This would have more direct explicit instruction in those three primary areas on phonics, phonemic awareness, and orthographic mapping for our younger students and then for older students the emphasis shifts to comprehension and how does all of that come together.

The third focus is around empowering writers and this year they were able to take all of our information and put together guides by grade level all in one place and it streamlined the process for teachers, so all of their supports are in one place. The final instruction goal was an OpenSciEd training for teachers in grades 6-8 which was well received by teachers.

Ms. Brust said in terms of interrupted learning there are three focus areas. One focus is on interrupted/accelerated learning professional development for teachers and paraprofessionals through Ribas Associates.

A second focus was high dosage tutoring at all of five schools and the third was the Math academy that ran in February and will run again in April. The Math Academy in February had 58 students attend out of the 227 invited and the April Academy has 329 invited.

In terms of DEI there is three focus areas. First is the Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices PD for administrators which is on how to make the schools culturally responsive to all community members. There was also the integration of Teaching for Justice Standards into the curriculum for grade 5. The teachers reviewed and evaluated a new textbook and thought about where the textbook might not have equal representation and created ways that they could integrate new materials into the curriculum.

Ms. Brust said the Teaching & Learning FY23 goals to develop and support excellent curriculum and instruction include:

Implementing the Science of Reading pedagogy Prek-6, implementing pathways for business, computer science, digital arts 9-12, implementing OpenSciEd grades 6-8 (year 2), develop Biomedical & Manufacturing Pathways for 9-12 and expand existing Pathways, expand World Language Spanish/grade 6, expand the DEI focus with Celebrating Community, tutoring, academies, and summer school, implementing units related to genocide and human right in grades 7 & 9 per the state statute. With the NEASC visit coming, PHS needs update and review curriculum guides 9-12. Finally, offering The Science of Reading PD which would equip each teacher to be a reading a teacher and will allow them to explore best practices and enable them to identify areas where students are struggling and what the best practice is to get them back on track. This will be welcomed by teachers as an amazing tool to have in the classroom.

Ms. Brust review the costs related to the curriculum goals. Mrs. Obey said these costs are part of the MOE budget.

Ms. Brust said the biggest budget ask is for one full time educator to develop and support the pathways with placement oversight and also teach business part time. Grant funding is used for the district wide PD, AP training, interrupted learning tutors, acceleration academies, summer school and transition program and AP support for students. Mrs. Scholl asked if the Science of Reading PD will alleviate the load of reading specialists and Ms. Brust said not right way as it takes two years to complete.

Ms. Brust reviewed the new materials needed to support instruction. They include textbooks for core curriculum, materials to support Pathways expansion, materials to support new courses, OpenSciEd materials, DEI materials, Newsela for grades 7-12 which is an online resource that provides access to multiple genres and current events in all humanities subjects and No Red Ink for grades 7-12 which is an online diagnostic and progress monitoring tool for English. Mrs. Obey said all these costs will be funded by the curriculum line so the only budget ask is the full time educator for the Pathways development and oversight.

Mrs. Bollinger asked where the Social Justice Standards came from, and Ms. Brust said from it comes from Teaching for Justice which used to be an organization called Teaching for Tolerance. It is a site that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion and has many units of instruction, and it was the option that the teachers selected. The group went through a process in the spring with the grade five teachers and looked at the things that they thought aligned most closely to the work that they wanted to do in Pembroke. The district wants students in Pembroke to come out of their K-12 experience in terms of thinking

about justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion and these were the standards that the group felt the district is already doing. The group focused the work on grades 3-5 last year.

Mrs. Bollinger said she believes this aligns with critical race theory though ideology by sorting kids by identity. She doesn't believe it aligns with what Pembroke is trying to do, for example, the Town voted against the DEI committee because they don't want to move towards critically theory thought. Mr. Tropeano said he does not see these standards tying to CRT because he knows the five tenets of CRT. He confirmed that Mrs. Bollinger is referring to the ideology not the tenets which is different. Mr. Bollinger said she believes this is going against what the Town wants and feels that this could hurt the Town. She realizes it is done in good intention, but it should be more middle of the road.

Ms. Brust said she does not see it as CRT. She said when she started teaching back in 1993 they were talking about bias and stereotypes, and they are important developmental reasoning skills that are learned about yourself and about culture for you to navigate the world. She feels it would be a disservice to students if they are not being informed about these things that they are going to navigate as they leave PPS or as they progress through PPS Mrs. Bollinger said she thinks this would take away the parents' ability to teach about the cultural differences in a way that aligns with each family's ideology. Mrs. Obey said she would argue the opposite, that this provides the opportunity to share family ideology with peers, so they understand other's cultural history and beliefs. Ms. Brust said it is already happening respectfully in classrooms where students are being taught how to think for themselves and they're going to disagree. The PPS classrooms are very diverse, not racially diverse, but they are diverse and it's imperative that they are taught to represent their thinking in a way that's respectful and not harmful to others.

Mr. Kennedy said he read it with a concern over whether anything could be construed as CRT, and he didn't come to that conclusion. He is hearing that this is about creating a culture or community and does the individual understand who they are and feel comfortable in that environment where they can be themselves.

Mrs. Scholl said she read it multiple times and looked at it from the CRT perspective and also looked at whether this would create community or divide people. She decided she isn't sure it is CRT but encouraging people to identify the various groups they fit in puts it on a slippery slope of potentially identifying categories which might divide people. She suggested to tweak the wording, such as around bias. Ms. Brust said this is language that teachers will use to guide them in their thinking in terms of making sure students know their own history and making sure they are proud of their history.

Mr. Tropeano said he read the standards multiple times and read CRT's five tenants many, many times and understands it, although he does not agree with it. He said he is concerned about where the line between parenting and education is and not just with this, because the line has shifted over the years. He is concerned about the words "injustice and unfairness" as they are subjective. He asked how much of the curriculum standards have changed besides the genocide statute and Ms. Brust said a few years ago a statute was implemented that has to do with the teaching of civics and it requires that students do a project in grade eight or at the middle school level and at the high school level they can do it as a group, or they can do it individually. It is a shift asking students to become civically active in their community. Mr. Tropeano asked how the summer reading books are chosen and Ms. Brust said teachers work in their curriculum groups throughout the year and over the summer and they can suggest a book to their Content Supervisor to integrate into their classrooms. They vet the book for appropriateness and if there is something that could be a concern to parents the district will send a letter home about the book and give the option to not participate and provide an alternative.

Ms. Brust said the standards presented are a draft and the group will be looking for some input in regard to the work as the humanities curriculum moves forward. Mrs. Obey said there will be more feedback on this topic when teachers do additional work over the summer/fall and the feedback will be brought back to the committee in the fall. Mrs. Obey said some students may not have a strong family support network so it is important that the district creates a place where students can ask questions and have conversations. Mr. Tropeano said race is important to the committee, but this is more than that, it is about inclusion and the committee agreed. Mrs. Bollinger said everyone should feel that they have a voice, but the district has to be careful based on what the Town wants. Mrs. Scholl said there has to be supports for respectful dialogue and that is the intent of this. Mr. Kennedy said the district is creating a culture, community and an environment to have the dialogue.

Transportation Update

Mrs. Obey said 5 year ridership from 2017-2022 has been consistent outside of 20-21. Elementary transportation is free, so these numbers reflect the number of students with passes but not necessarily riding the bus. She is not anticipating a bus savings this year. The cost this year is \$1.8 million including all regular education busses, late busses, vocational busses to Silver lake and South Shore Voc Tech and a cost share bus to Norfolk Aggie. Buss pass revenue brings in about \$100k and this year is \$123k. The contract with First Student ends 6/30/22 and the have been the only bidder in Pembroke for a number of years. The contract is currently a 3 year contract with 2 - 1 year options so FY23 will be the first year of a 1 year option. The FY20-22 annual increase was 3.25%. The wildcard is the cost of fuel, and the district will see an increase in costs soon. PPS has 26 busses with 24 regular day transportation, two vocational busses for Silver Lake and South Shore Voc Tech and a cost share bus for Norfolk Aggie with surrounding towns. The most efficient way to run a bus is with tiers. The district has 14 two tier busses and 11 three tier busses. 24 busses for are needed for secondary runs, 9 for Hobomock, 12 for Bryantville and 15 are needed for North Pembroke.

Utilities Update - Heat

Mrs. Obey said it is difficult to compare utilities year to year. Last year the district had to keep windows open so more heat was used resulting in higher costs. The district usually spends \$200k-\$250k but last year was \$304k and this year through February the cost is \$228,656 with a budget of \$335k.

Utilities Update - Electricity

Mrs. Obey said the solar farm numbers are very hard to track. The solar farm generates enough energy for the schools and town buildings. There has been an uptick in electricity costs. In the past the district had budgeted \$500k and FY21 the cost was \$524,768. For FY22 there is \$480k budgeted and to date through February the cost is at \$327,471 so it will probably go over budget. Mrs. Scholl asked about a lock on kilowatts and Mrs. Obey explained that the district has no control over the electrical or the heat as its part of a power options contract with the Town. Mrs. Scholl asked about savings from the future replacement of HVAC units at PHS and Mrs. Obey said she anticipates some savings.

Future Meeting Dates and Topics

4/5/22

VOTE: At 8:43PM, on a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Susie Scholl, it was unanimously voted to enter Executive Session Pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3) to conduct a review and potential approval and release of Executive Session Minutes and to discuss a personnel matter as an open meeting may a detrimental effect on the legal position of the School Committee, as declared by the Chair, with additional business to be discussed.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Lance Kennedy, Susie Scholl and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

Consideration of Approval: Executive Session Minutes of October 16, 2018, December 18, 2018, April 2, 2019, April 30, 2019, May 21, 2019, June 4, 2019 and June 18, 2019.

VOTE: On a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Lance Kennedy, it was unanimously voted to approve and release the Executive Session Minutes of October 16, 2018, December 18, 2018, April 2, 2019, April 30, 2019, May 21, 2019, June 4, 2019 and June 18, 2019 as presented.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Lance Kennedy, Susie Scholl and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: At 9:05PM, on a motion made by Lance Kennedy and seconded by Susie Scholl, it was unanimously voted to adjourn.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Lance Kennedy, Susie Scholl and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

APPROVED: April 5, 2022

MOTIONS

VOTE: On a motion made by Susie Scholl and seconded by Lance Kennedy, it was unanimously voted to approve the school committee meeting minutes of March 22, 2022 as presented.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Lance Kennedy, Susie Scholl and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

VOTE: At 8:43PM, on a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Susie Scholl, it was unanimously voted to enter Executive Session Pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3) to conduct a review and potential approval and release of Executive Session Minutes and to discuss a personnel matter as an open meeting may a detrimental effect on the legal position of the School Committee, as declared by the Chair, with additional business to be discussed.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Lance Kennedy, Susie Scholl and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Lance Kennedy, it was unanimously voted to approve and release the Executive Session Minutes of October 16, 2018, December 18, 2018, April 2, 2019, April 30, 2019, May 21, 2019, June 4, 2019 and June 18, 2019 as presented.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Lance Kennedy, Susie Scholl and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

VOTE: At 9:05PM, on a motion made by Lance Kennedy and seconded by Susie Scholl, it was unanimously voted to adjourn.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Lance Kennedy, Susie Scholl and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none